

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
KATHLEEN
BLISS

13th October, 1948

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID in the religious press and on the radio and in "follow-up meetings" in a number of localities about the constituting of the World Council of Churches and the speeches made at Amsterdam. Soon the papers prepared for discussion in the four Sections by four preparatory Commissions will be published.¹ But at Amsterdam people met who are unlikely to meet again for some years, and exchanges took place, particularly within the Sections, which were enlightening to those present. It is a pity that some of the good things said, for example in the Third Section (that on the Disorder of Society) and in the meeting of the Commission which prepared for it, should not have a wider audience, and in this News-Letter we give the gist of a few of these contributions.

It became clear at an early stage in the preparation that the disorder of society was a vast subject, and that there was a danger that accounts of various forms of disorder might be contributed by people from different parts of the world without proper co-ordination or real interchange of ideas. The danger was obviated by the decision to make the nature and problems of a scientific and technical society the dominating theme of the report. This saved a great deal of aimless

¹ In Great Britain by the Student Christian Movement Press, Ltd., four volumes, price 12s. 6d. each, 42s. for four volumes.

NEWS LETTER

THE ORIENTAL VIEW AT
AMSTERDAM

PROFESSOR HROMADKA AND
COMMUNISM

SUPPLEMENT

CHRISTIANITY AND THE
MODERN WORLD VIEW—V

BY
H. A. HODGES

meandering, but it opened up a wide divergence, when the Section met, between East and West in their attitude towards the technical society. Those from the West tended to underline the things that had been lost to society by the coming of technology, while from the East came an eager desire for technical development as the means of relieving poverty. It is a strange and lamentable fact that when western Christians discuss the technical society they think of cities, mines and factories, and only give their attention to agriculture for a brief moment when someone with a burning concern (in the case of this Section it was Mr. Charles Taft of the United States) leaps into the discussion with a reminder that but for agriculture the group would not be discussing anything at all, that "the scientific and technical society" includes agriculture. Those from the Far East commented on the lack of interest in the Section in the major problems of all eastern countries. Their population is 90 per cent rural and desperately poor. They want to keep agriculture as the basis of their economies, applying science and technology to it and introducing industrial development alongside.

A new problem, common to East and West, is the irruption of Communism. In this part of the discussion the contribution of the Chinese was of particular interest. Professor T. C. Chao of Yenching University, who has been made one of the *collegium* of six Presidents of the World Council, outlined the position in the following way.

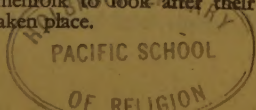
The Communists in China have worked along a definite line of policy, deliberately avoiding the large towns. They have had good reasons for doing this : they have feared the corruption of the morale of their armies, they have known that towns would need policing and feeding, and they have feared that they would be cut off from their own supplies. They have acted on the supposition that the towns would capitulate of their own free will if the surrounding countryside were communist. There is widespread despair of the present Government, and it has lost that passive public support which, in China, keeps a government in power. No other party can grow without military strength, so there

is no alternative to the Communists. The Church has to decide how it is going to carry on under the Communists as and where they come. But the Church is in difficulties over making a decision because much of its thinking and policy are European directed. If the Communists came to the areas which he knew, the Westerners could not stay: the Chinese would do so.

What Professor Chao said was later amplified by one of the outstanding members of the Section, Dr. Wu Yi-Fang, president of Ginling College. Her experience among her own students of communist methods of work and the thought she has given to the total situation make her contribution particularly enlightening. One of the characteristics of China, she said, is that all new movements derive their leadership from educated people, and Communism is no exception to this. One of the chief things that has happened wherever the Communists have come is a drastic reallocation of the land. On the whole small farmers are well pleased with this, but they have taken no lead in bringing it about. Wherever Communism comes there are refugees.¹ Communism is emphatically not what the West knows by a working-class movement. The spread of Communism is due chiefly to the fact that it has been injected into a situation where there are two predominant factors: one is the universal poverty, so widespread, so chaotic at present, that government is really impossible; the other is the slow breakdown of Chinese culture, which has been wearing away slowly but steadily for years past. There will have to be something new, and China knows no other forms of socialism than the Communist form which has come to her in recent years.

Many young Christians in this position are desperately impatient with the pace of change, and very suspicious of anything that smacks of capitalism. Here is the Church—a tiny minority, something like $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent—in a vast non-Christian population. The Communists are giving notice

¹ A recent report on refugees in China says that farmers, merchants and others frequently go away, leaving their womenfolk to look after their interests, and come back when the change has taken place.



of welcome to Christian Churches to stay on in the areas they occupy. There are doubts among Christians whether Communist policy on this matter will remain constant, but there are still more profound doubts on another score: China has an age-long tradition of tolerance, and what some thoughtful Chinese fear is that the Christian Church may gradually cease to be distinctively Christian. Into a discussion which predominantly thought in terms of what a Christian Church ought to do in a society in which Christianity had been long established and still had a hold on people and institutions, Dr. Wu brought the wholesome reminder that the Church cannot always give away its life in an attempt to preserve society. Sometimes all its strength must be given to preserving its own life as a small distinct community, emphasizing its difference from the world around it. And for some of us, at any rate, a new awareness of the desperate alternatives which face the Christian Church in China came home as she spoke. All that the western Churches have helped to build in China through their missionary work and their great Christian educational institutions is going to be put to a fearful test. It is exceedingly difficult for Chinese Christians working in the Communist-occupied areas to communicate to others outside their inner thoughts about the Communist régime, and this makes them the more dependent on our prayers.

PROFESSOR HROMADKA AND COMMUNISM

A few months ago (C.N-L. No. 311) we published a Supplement by Professor Hromadka of Prague, in which he stated his reasons for the action he has taken in working with the Communists in Czechoslovakia. He was present at the Amsterdam Assembly and made a powerful speech. The central thing he had to say was much the same as he said in the Supplement—that the era in which the western States of Europe led the Continent and the world had come to an end, and anyone who was trying to live as a Christian in the real world and not in the past had to accept this with all its implications. The vacuum left by the decay of the bourgeoisie who had been the leading class in the old Europe was being filled by new and vigorous forces from

the East. The Amsterdam Assembly was very sensitive to his challenge: there were thrusts in it that went home. There was also wide agreement with the view expressed in the News-Letter when we published his Supplement, that, however widely men may differ in their political choices in times of crisis, Christians must learn to speak and listen to one another within the Christian fellowship, even though they may have no doubt that they ought in the name of conscience to resist what is said to the last breath in their bodies.

Many letters have reached us commenting on Professor Hromadka's Supplement, and expressing agreement or disagreement, approval or disapproval with varying degrees of vigour. But in the nature of things little disagreement can come from those who remain in Czechoslovakia and disagree with the régime; the steady stream of political refugees leaving the country tells its own story.

Among the letters was one from a distinguished Czech, Professor Osusky, former Czech Ambassador in Paris and now a Professor in Colgate University, New York. "It is simply beyond my comprehension," he writes, "that a man can accept, defend and help to set up a Communist totalitarian dictatorship, assist silently at the suppression of constitutional guaranty of the secret vote in general elections and approve the holding of general elections on a single list of candidates drawn up by the Communist minority—and still claim to be a Democrat."

Another letter comes from a Scotsman who has lived in Prague and elsewhere in eastern Europe for a number of years and is well acquainted with the situation both before and since the Communists came to power in Czechoslovakia.

Here is his letter:—

"So far I have hesitated to criticize Hromadka, partly because of my reluctance to do anything which might harm ecumenical relationships, partly because I thought the newspapers were giving enough information from Prague to counteract any false impressions. But recently I have been wondering whether the weight of his authority and the publicity his defence of Communism has received here and

in America may not be misleading some progressive Christians who have a sneaking sympathy with the ideals of Communism, and who would like to find some authoritative confirmation for an optimistic view of the situation. Most of us would be glad if Hromadka proved right. And although events will in time demonstrate the truth more surely than arguments, it is important in the meantime to prevent the growth of illusions. Since we can do little to help the Czechoslovak Churches in their dilemma, we must try to resist the temptation to judge them or to offer them advice from the grand-stand. But since our judgment on world issues must be affected by our interpretation of developments in Czechoslovakia, we have a right to expect convincing proof before we accept reassurances about the freedom of the Church under Communism even from a man of Professor Hromadka's great reputation.

"Having listened to Hromadka and read his articles hopefully I must say with regret that I am not convinced. He cannot deny the facts of totalitarian tyranny. Yet he seeks to justify it by the overriding necessity of a world revolution which, according to him, is in harmony with the will of the people, and as a Christian he is seeking to witness to the Crucified and Risen Christ by throwing in his lot with those who do these things and choose this means. The question is whether it is possible to carry on the 'existential struggle' for the soul of Communism not from the Cross of judgment but from the throne of power.

"Hromadka frankly admits that his views are not shared by many Czechoslovak Christians. The problem is that these Christian opponents of Communism cannot readily express their views either at home or abroad. Those who get permission to go abroad must remain silent or else mask their true opinions. I have experience of the psychological terror which seems to inhibit even the most courageous men from admitting the truth in public. Only those who are living abroad can speak quite freely. I quote two letters from outstanding Czech Christian leaders now abroad. One writes of present conditions: 'It is not an encouraging picture. People don't feel at all happy. Most of them live

in a bitter, sour and unfriendly negation of all that is coming from the government, newspapers, and broadcasts. The pressure produced on them seems to be up to now rather a spiritual, mental, psychological one than a direct police terror. Nevertheless the atmosphere of fear, uncertainty and mistrust is again at home in Czechoslovakia.' The other letter is from a professor who recently decided to remain abroad, because to go back would be 'a suicide' wrote to me that opposition was growing. He thinks that Hromadka is wrong in his analysis of the situation. He is mistaking 'a new form of imperialism for a world social revolution'.

"There are probably temperamental reasons which account for Hromadka's more optimistic view, but his dialectical theory of revolution, shared by others on the Continent, must also be taken into consideration. 'This is a world revolution, therefore we cannot stop it. It is a radical revolution, therefore we must welcome it.' This argument is more than an appeal for readiness to accept progressive change. Hromadka assumes that progress comes by revolution, and that revolution is a kind of revelation. He asks us to suspend all moral and Christian standards of judgment because this is a world revolution. The argument of revolutionary necessity can be applied to any revolution, and in fact was applied to both the Russian revolution and the Nazi revolution. It was against this view of history as held by the German Christians that Barth protested. Hromadka is a Barthian, and he is quite entitled to proclaim the judgment of God on Western civilization. But does his position leave him equally free to say 'No' to the idolatries of the new historical movement, or by what right can he claim that it is beyond judgment? I feel that his criticism (on page 12 of his Supplement, for example), that the revolution leads to the loss of some bourgeois values—does not go nearly far enough. It was not because of the decay of punctuality or politeness that fifteen thousand Czechoslovak citizens have in the past few months left their country.

"Revolutionary necessity, as we understand it, applies when evil has grown so rank that it has become intolerable,

when violence is the only means by which a desperate people can deliver themselves from oppression, and so on. But Czechoslovakia since 1945 had been advancing rapidly towards socialism, with the consent of all parties. The position of the masses, so far from being intolerable, was improving at a rate only restricted by the general economic situation. There were no large capitalist vested interests left to block the advance, the middle class had been almost liquidated by economic changes, and if there was some opposition from the 'political helplessness and the lack of a constructive programme on the part of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie' which delayed further reforms, this feeble opposition could not have held up a really popular movement already possessed of all the machinery of propaganda. In three months elections were due. How can we be expected to believe that this was a spontaneous revolution of the people and not engineered from above or from outside the country?

"In the long run the revolution must be judged by its effect on the welfare of the people, not only their economic prosperity and security, but their liberty and spiritual welfare. The Church, as Hromadka says, has not yet been directly affected. But no one who has read the Czech Church periodicals in recent months can help noticing the changed atmosphere: When I left Prague in May, the Church was not persecuted, but it was certainly not free from pressure. Now reports suggest that the Church struggle is on. The Roman Catholics are opposing the new legislation. Hromadka himself speaks of a point at which he might feel compelled to resist. But how will the people receive an appeal for resistance in the name of religion from a Church which has gone so far to establish the authority of the new régime? The case of Hromadka shows how difficult it is to divorce civil and religious liberty, and how difficult it is to take up a positive attitude to Communism without being committed to unqualified support of all it stands for and all its corruptions."

Kathleen Bliss

P.S. We are grateful to readers who return used C.N-L. envelopes as new ones are still difficult to obtain.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE MODERN WORLD VIEW—V

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

BY H. A. HODGES

IN our second Supplement we defined God provisionally as a being, other than ourselves, who embodies and exceeds our highest ideal, and with whom we can enter into relations. In the last Supplement we examined the meaning of the last clause of this definition, and now it is time to look into the penultimate clause.

GOD AS THE EMBODIMENT OF OUR HIGHEST IDEAL

That this is also an essential part of the conception of God was plain, among others, to Anselm, who takes it, be it noted, as a thing generally agreed and needing no argument that God is to be understood as "that than which a greater cannot be conceived". The author of the *Proslogion* was not playing metaphysical games with abstract concepts borrowed from the philosophy of his time; he was interrogating his own mind at the moment when he prayed, and finding that it was to God as the greatest thinkable that he prayed. And finding this in his own mind as the salient point of its devotion, he justly concluded that it was the heart of other people's devotion too. Of course his conception of God had more content than this, which he spent much of his meditation in explicating. But it seems that the original formula of "the greatest thinkable" is what is common to all who worship at all, while the other details are what vary according to place and time. Even in the crudest religions, so far as one can see, the gods are the embodiment of what we should most like to have in ourselves: power and life.

As ideals grow in depth and complexity with the growth of civilization, it seems that each of them in turn becomes attached to the gods and enrolled as a divine attribute. So in course of time the gods become intellectualized and moralized. Still the main character of them remains, they are for civilized men the archetypes of those qualities which they most esteem. The Greek pantheon especially represents this stage, and Greek

philosophy takes us on to the next, where all the gods are rolled into one, and he is the synthesis of all archetypes. So too, of course, is the God of Hebrew monotheism, and the Hebrews took his moral character more seriously than the Greeks, as is natural since they, rather than the Greeks, entered into personal relations with him.

But thought goes further even than this. In addition to blending all the archetypes as attributes of God, we can ask whether they may not all have a common character, an essential nature of which they are all manifestations. If so, this of course would be the essential nature of God, the unity behind the plurality of his attributes. The Greeks and their later pupils found this common character in *being*, so that God was *being* in the fullest sense of the word, or "pure act". Religious thought not biassed by Greek metaphysics seems to prefer the view that all the archetypes are qualities or manifestations of *life*, and God is therefore fulness of life. That is how Bowman exhibits him in his *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*.¹ God so conceived is no longer merely the synthesis, but the Archetype of archetypes.

GOD AS CREATOR, RULER, AND FRIEND

The control over nature which we have ascribed to God takes its place as one of the archetypes which meet in Him, since it is after all a thing which we attempt and in a measure achieve for ourselves. Man does not make the physical world and cannot alter its laws ; but he can so far control certain factors within it as to set up a little world of his own, a world of tools, and comforts, and works of art and science, which stand out to some extent as a world within the world, different from and sometimes at odds with the larger whole. The more man's own world develops on its own lines, the more it becomes liable to disturbance by the forces of crude nature outside ; and so there grows up the idea of the inscrutable and ineluctable power of fate. But fate is never the whole truth about the world in its relation to us ; for the gods are believed to make and maintain the natural order as we make and maintain our own social order, which means that behind the apparent opposition man and the gods are really akin and are doing the same sort of thing. On this basis the gods can be and are appealed to as the reconcilers

¹ Macmillan & Co. 1938.

of man and nature, the rulers of both and givers of harmony and life. The Old Testament goes further. It makes God the Creator and Designer of history, i.e. of situations and opportunities which call out the best in us and make possible a life of friendship with Him.

The relationship so established between God and man is closer and more intimate than any which man can have with his fellows. It alone has no limitations, since there is nothing on either side to conceal, and no possibility on man's side of concealing anything. No moment of life is outside this relationship. God "has beset us behind and before, and laid his hand upon us". This is intimacy indeed; and while for a moment it may appear frightening, on consideration it is found welcome, being in fact an archetype of experience. For man is not a person in and by himself, but in and by his relations with other persons, and can be wholly a person only in a total intercourse with another. This total intercourse is an ideal which cannot find anything like its realization among men. It is realizable only when the other party to it is God. Here again Bowman has put his finger on something profound.

THE LIGHT UNAPPROACHABLE

There is yet a further stage. As we meditate on power, wisdom, goodness, and all the attributes which we ascribe to God, and realize more and more that in Him they must be present in an absolute degree, so we come to realize that in this absolute degree they are something beyond our conception. Anselm found this as he went on in the *Proslogion*. He began with God as that than which no greater can be conceived, and set himself to work out inside this framework the attributes of God. In doing so he came to the recognition that that than which no greater can be conceived is itself something greater than can be conceived, the greatest thinkable is too great to be thinkable. This, he says, is the light unapproachable in which God dwells, and nothing other than God can enter into that light and see God in His fulness.¹ It is true, the more we learn about God the more we learn that He is inscrutable, and dwells in a light which is darkness to us. And so the idea of God embodies a striking paradox. He is the Archetype of archetypes, but an archetype

¹ *Proslogion*, chaps. 14-16.

which we cannot see. He is the realization of our ideals, in a form which we cannot understand. In so far as the idea of God is drawn from our own purposes and standards, it has meaning ; but in so far as He is conceived as absolute, He negates all meaning. All positive statements about Him are mere pointers. We must unsay them as fast as we say them. But we can never stop saying them, because to leave them unsaid would be more misleading still.

An ideal is a quality of life which we have potentially and desire to have actually, or which we have in a measure and desire to have wholly. For ourselves, it is an object of desire and effort ; but when we see it embodied in someone else, we admire it, and are drawn to contemplation and imitation of that person. When we see it embodied in someone in a degree which seems high above our reach, we do more than admire and contemplate and imitate ; we are humbled before it, and are drawn to service.

God, as the supreme ideal and synthesis of all ideals, is supremely admirable and supremely attractive. We are drawn to contemplate, to imitate, to worship Him. Being higher than all height, He is supremely humbling, and draws us to His service. But can we serve Him ? Yes, on condition that His will for us is known or knowable ; and in so far as this is so, the identification of ourselves with His will gives us an objectivity of standpoint, and sets free impulses in us which are usually inhibited by the overpowering sense of our own weakness. Its fruits are thus strength, unity, and wisdom. But at the same time we know that God is beyond us, and His will is beyond our conceiving. Can we even contemplate Him truly, without weaving our own fantasies which will become idols and get between Him and us ? Can we know enough of His will to serve him truly, and not build fantastic structures of our own which will be only Towers of Babel ? Who are we that darken counsel by words without knowledge ? We are senseless as the beasts and worthless as dust and ashes before Him.

The Christian life is a continual alternation and interpenetration of these two attitudes.

WAYS OF KNOWING GOD

This tension between knowledge and ignorance of God brings to the fore an issue which has hitherto been passed over, but which now demands attention. The idea of God has been built up from a single foundation, viz., the human mind or spirit, conscious of its own finitude and imperfection, but drawn to project its own highest qualities to infinity and to seek them at the centre of reality. From this starting-point we have proceeded along two parallel roads: on the one hand arguing to God as the purposive controller of history, Who enters into personal intercourse with us, and on the other hand building up the idea of Him out of our ideals, raised to an absolute level. Both these processes of thought are at work in Christianity, and it is clear that as they go on they will interpret and support one another. For in the first place, it is clear that unless we begin with some idea of God and His character, and so of what He may be expected to want of us, no situation that can arise will bear any meaning for us, and the line of communication between Him and ourselves cannot be set up. On the other hand, it is equally clear that as we go on our way under His guidance, our understanding of life will alter and our ideals undergo modification, and this will react upon our conception of God. So far we have taken for granted that it is possible for us to do our thinking about God in this double way. But now a problem has arisen which puts it in serious doubt; for God in His capacity as Archetype of archetypes has retired beyond the range of our knowledge, and if He remains there, the key to our interpretation of situations as they arise will be taken away.

Our first thought in these circumstances is to ask whether there is any other way in which our knowledge of God might be supplemented and clarified. Three possibilities alone exist, and we must consider them in order.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

(a) *Nature*

We have already held that God shows Himself in the situations which arise in our daily life: but is He not also to be found in speculative inference based on the general structure of our universe? It used to be held that the fundamental principles of science were such as to involve Him as a necessary consequence.

This is no longer true ; but yet, when we have accepted Him on our own grounds, and are thus committed to regarding the universe as His work, may it not lend itself to decipherment on something like the old lines and yield, even now, a kind of philosophical theism? Do not the heavens still declare His glory?

The heavens declare His glory only to those who already believe in Him. Even to these, they do not tell anything new, they only illustrate the truths which they already have, and invest them with a strong emotional aura ; which is a good thing from the point of view of devotion, but not from our present point of view. We cannot find in the physical world more of God than we already know from other sources.

(b) "*Mystical*" *Contemplation*

Some wish to escape from this frustration by rising into a new mode of apprehension, higher and truer than the senses and discursive thought, a "vision", often called "mystical", which sees behind the veil of sense. Such language may mean much or little. It may mean no more than an intuitive apprehension, such as may come to a poet or a metaphysician, of something which could after all be analysed and expressed discursively by anyone who had the patience to do it. In that case it is nothing to get excited about. Or it may mean that mode of contemplation, well known in all or most of the higher religions, which puts all definite images and ideas beneath the "cloud of forgetting", and approaches God in the "cloud of unknowing". This is a real way of approach to God, and in itself perfectly normal and healthy, but it is no solution of our problem. Rather it is the very problem itself, viz., that in order to approach God we have at a certain point to leave the human understanding behind.

It may be urged that the cloud is darkness only to the discursive intellect, which it defeats, whereas in itself it is light. This may in a sense be true but still it only changes the shape of our problem. For then we have to point out that no one except a recluse can spend his life in this cloud, be it of light or of darkness. The ordinary man spends his life in the world, thinking and speaking and acting. Then either his contemplative life is to be cut off from his active life, which means that he will

be a divided personality, or the former must be brought to bear upon the latter. And how can it, unless it is translated into terms which the discursive intellect can grasp? And again, how can that be? Our problem remains.

(c) *Revelation*

We might be secured at least against grievous error and set on the right way if God Himself would speak, not in the way in which He continually speaks, by merely marshalling events, but by communicating a message couched in human terms, in words and concepts, which we could then use with confidence as our clue to the interpretation of events. No doubt God would have to speak so as to be understood by us, i.e. in the language known to us, and therefore in images and abstract terms such as we ourselves use; but He could presumably do what is wholly beyond our power, viz., furnish a set of images and concepts which were guaranteed free from harmful error, and could be used as a standard for our own thinking thereafter. This is the idea of *revelation*.

Christianity affirms that God has actually done this, the recipients of the revelation being first a nation chosen out for the purpose, and then smaller groups within that nation who became the bearers of deeper truths. But Christianity affirms also that God has done more than this. He has appeared in person and lived among us as one of us. In so doing He showed His mind and character in the form of a human life, while at the same time, in His public and private utterances, laying down in conceptual terms the standard for its interpretation. This overcomes our difficulty as far as is at all possible, by giving a full revelation in a single human life-span.

Is this a thing which could have been known independently by human "reason"? The historical fact of the Incarnation is evidently not so. Historical facts can only be known empirically. But that is not the whole story. Facts do not manifest themselves to us of their own motion, without our doing anything to help. If the facts give us sensory evidence of their occurrence, it is we who, by applying concepts to the interpretation of the sensory evidence, find meaning in it and so become aware of the facts. No facts can be recognized for what they are unless, in addition

to being presented to us by the senses, they meet in us an idea which can interpret them. The idea may first arise in us on the occasion of the facts being presented to us, or it may have been framed by us beforehand; as the idea of Neptune was in Adams' mind before he saw the planet. Now, in the present instance it is mere matter of history that a complex mass of ideas had come into existence, and become almost world-wide, before the revealing act of God was performed; and that in performing it He fulfilled widespread expectations and made use of images and concepts that go back to the earliest ages of man. The idea of God Himself; of revelation by dream, by inspiration, by theophany, by incarnation; of the divine king who dies for his people; of sacrifice, atonement, and rebirth; these and many more pre-existing ideas constitute the framework in which the Incarnation actually took place. We had thought of it before God did it.

The relation between the idea and the facts is indeed reciprocal. The idea illuminates the facts, and is itself accredited by finding facts to illuminate. At the same time it is noteworthy that the fact, when it really happens, in great measure corrects and alters our pre-conception. Christ is the Jewish hope, perhaps, but not at all as the Jews had held it; yet it is strange that the new form which He gives it is actually more adequate and true to its underlying intention than the current formulations were. His relation to the Gentile hope is just the same. And as the idea interprets the facts while submitting to correction by them, so each confirms and accredits the other. The idea was in the first instance an anticipation built up in faith on the basis of the metaphysical presupposition. Granted that presupposition, and the theism which is its most adequate embodiment, and also the existing state of man, we put these things together and infer revelation and the rest. The initial theism and the pre-supposition behind it are verified or post-justified when the revelation appears in fact. And it accredits itself as fact by its circumstantiality, fuller of detail (all relevant) than any of the anticipations, and by its completeness as fulfilling them all.

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